

President Kennedy's Motorcycle Escort

Bobby Hargis rode the left rear of the limosine in the inside position. His testimony attracted the attention of critics of the Warren Report since he stated that during the shooting he received particles of blood on his helmet and motorcycle. Given his position this would almost certainly indicate that the fatal head shot to the president was delivered from a position to the right front of the limosine, that is, the direction of the grassy knoll and the concrete wall. Hargis testified: "When President Kennedy straightened up in the car, the bullet hit him in the head. I was splattered with blood and brain and kind of bloody water. It wasn't really blood."

This seems straightforward enough. It was delivered to Commission Counsel on April 8, 1964 in Dallas.

Moreover, Officer B. J. MARTIN, who rode the outside position to the left rear of the limosine, next to Hargis, and near the curb, also told Commission Counsel that he was splattered with blood. He said there were blood stains on the left side of his helmet and uniform, etc. Sounds like a lot of blood. However, Martin testified that he didn't notice this blood until much later that afternoon when he was at Parkland Hospital. Other officers there didn't notice it either. His statement was delivered to Commission Counsel on April 3, 1964.

Unfortunately the statements of both men had already been contradicted - not to say hopelessly confused - by Officer Marion Baker when he testified before the Commission on March 25, 1964. He stated that he had talked to the solo officers who were nearest the president's car about 4 o'clock P.M. on Nov. 22, 1963, when they all had a meeting at the police station. Baker said that the men on the left hand side of the president's car - that is, Martin and Hargis - had said they knew the president was shot from behind because they were ~~writing~~ riding to the left front of the limosine and got spattered with blood.

"Say that again, Officer Baker", said Counsel Belin. Baker said it again. In fact Belin made him say it four times. The officers were to the front of the limosine, so they had said. And they had been spattered on the right side.

Belin was plainly flabbergasted knowing perfectly well the story that Hargis and Martin were going to tell, but never once did he bring up the significant point, which is that every one knew by that time that Hargis and Martin were to the rear of the limosine and not "immediately in front" of it as Baker said they said they were.

By the time Martin and Hargis gave their official statements to the Commission they were stuck with all that blood; and they were also stuck with their positions proved by the films. Why did they make false statements to Baker? They didn't want to be put behind that limosine now, that's why.

It is astounding to realize that Martin and Hargis are not the only members of the motorcycle escort to the immediate rear of the car who preferred not to know where they were at the fatal moments. James Chaney who rode one of the positions to the right rear of the limosine told different stories about where he was too. Hargis testified that immediately after the shots, Chaney spurred up his cycle and rode past the limosine and Curry testified Chaney rode up and told him the president had been hit.

Baker's testimony agrees. Baker testified that he had seen Chaney at Parkland Hospital that afternoon and Chaney had told him that two shots hit Kennedy first and then one hit the Governor. Chaney told Baker he was to the side of the car, and that he knew the shots came from behind because of the way the president fell. And he mimicked it for Baker. Leftward, and presumably forward.

So far so good. Only we find, to our amazement that Chaney told a totally different story about where he was at the fatal moment; on Nov. 24, 1964 (according to Mark Lane's testimony) the Houston Chronicle carried an interview with Chaney. Chaney told the Chronicle that he knew the president was shot from behind because he, Chaney, was riding to the front of the limousine (and presumably saw shots hit the concrete.)

Now just where was Chaney? Well, he was behind the limousine. So were Martin and Hargis. Why did they all three in the hours immediately after the assassination tell Baker (and in Chaney's case the Chronicle) that they were in front of the limousine? Later, of course, when they viewed the films they found out where they were. Not one of those three men riding the escort behind the president wanted to admit right after the assassination that they had been in any such place.

What about the fourth man? His name was D.L. Jackson. At least Jackson was slated to ride the right rear of the limousine. (I haven't been able to ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ determine whether he rode the inside or outside position on the right rear.) Jackson was never called to testify nor was his name mentioned except in the radio logs (where he bore #138) any where in the report or the volumes otherwise ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ than in the radio log and the list of positions to be ridden that day. In fact, so far as I know nobody but me has ever been interested in him.

Why keep Jackson so much in the dark since, in fact, as I have discovered, Jackson was the great unsung hero of that day. He was in fact the officer whom Lee Bowers, Jr., saw riding up the steps on the knoll, wrecking his cycle, etc. Several people on the overpass (Walter Luke Winborn, for one, and Holland, for another) were fascinated by the behaviour of the motorcycle escort. And in films you can see spectators turning away from the sight of the century, Mrs. Kennedy on top of the limousine trunk, to watch something transpiring on the knoll near the steps. (Nix, Muchmore, ~~xxxxxxxx~~). The papers that day were full of the event of this cyclist riding up the knoll. Who was it?

The report never identified the man but managed to give the impression that it was Hargis or Haygood. Hargis testified that he left his cycle in the street. Haygood said he left his at the curb. Martin and Chaney rode on with the motorcade to Parkland Hospital. That leaves the unmentioned and, apparently unmentionable, Jackson, who rode right rear.

He bolted, or raced, up that hill just as Jacqueline Kennedy came over the right trunk of the limousine.

Jackson was in the in-crowd that day. Apparently he was one of the two officers (Harris the other) who took Johnson to Love Field. Escorted, that is. Jackson, #138, is also the officer who called at 1:44 P.M. on the 22nd of Nov., 1963, for a JP -Code 3 (emergency lights and signals) to Parkland Hospital. (In an effort to keep the body in Texas?)

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